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## **Abstract**

The dynamic of how civic education is framed during turbulent periods is illuminated through analysis of three Hong Kong official civic education curriculum guidelines (1985, 1996, 2012). These publicly available, officially sanctioned statements of purpose have particular relevance for education professionals, and are used around the world to characterize educational initiatives. Our focus is on guidelines, written during periods in which there was colonial hegemony by the UK (1985), an attempt to promote liberal democracy by the Hong Kongese (1996) and, an assertion of Chinese nationalism (2012). We argue that guidelines about civic education are similar across these times of political turbulence. There are shifts in the content of the guidelines but fundamental differences are not made explicit. The documents are not aligned with a theoretical framework of colonialism, liberal democracy or, Chinese nationalism but rather they are pragmatically oriented. Guidelines are signifiers of attempts to achieve normative stability.

## **Introduction**

As we were finalizing this article, Hong Kong was receiving worldwide attention with images of (often young) citizens participating in massive pro-democracy protests. Although directly initiated by Lam's extradition bill – that would allow extradition from Hong Kong to mainland China - the protests illustrate wider turbulent relations between the Beijing government and Hong Kong citizens.

For more than twenty years, civic education has been a key focus of such turbulences. In Hong Kong, policies for Civic education has both, responded to turbulences and generated new ones. In this article, we discuss curriculum change by analysing of three of Hong Kong's official guidelines for citizenship education

(CDC, 1985, 1996, 2012). The 1985 guidelines were written during the period of colonisation when policy makers were preparing youth for a post-colonial citizenship. The 1996 guidelines were published on the brink of the return of Hong Kong to China when support was in evidence among some Hong Kongese for liberal democracy after the June 4 Tiananmen Square incident when there was much concern about protecting Hong Kong's autonomy. The 2012 document emerged during attempts to impose Chinese nationalism (Lee; 1999; Leung, Yuen, Ngai, 2014). We are interested in examining whether these Hong Kong guidelines respond to distinctive historical and social circumstances.

Civic education is never neutral, and it is always context-dependent (Howard & Patten 2006). Very broadly, debates on civic education focus on the purposes of citizenship and the pedagogies for citizenship education. Generally, in east Asia, the significant factors about citizenship are considerations of economic nationalism, Confucianism and, developmental authoritarianism which may combine varying commitment to national pride, cultural pluralism, and global competence (David 2018; Ho, 2018). In Hong Kong civic education has been shaped by its own colonial history and socio-economic and political development and, the political development and nationalistic policies in China (Chong, Yuen & Leung, 2015; Leung, Chong & Yuen, 2016). This paper examines how these multiple perspectives and developments may influence the guidelines' content.

The article relates to debates about the impact of culture wars (Evans 2004) in civics curricula. In such wars, "competing camps, each with its own leaders, philosophy, beliefs and, pedagogical practices (Evans, 2004, p. 1) struggle to define policies and their enactments. Culture wars may be seen, for example, in the US (Hunter, 1991, 1996), in Australia [about history (Macintyre & Clark, 2003) and about citizenship (Macintyre & Simpson, 2009)], in the UK [about the English History curriculum (Smith, 2017)]. Some assert a clash of ideas,

identities, and social practices in divided societies (e.g., Goodhart, 2017), and refute previous attempts to assert a single narrative (e.g., Burns 1994). It is our intention here to examine whether and, if so, how these ‘clashes’ can be found across particular curricular documents in Hong Kong’s civic education and how this examination might illuminate discussions civic curriculum wars.

### **The political and education context**

Hong Kong is (in 2019) a densely populated major financial and business centre of approximately 7.4 million people. Hong Kong became a British colony in 1842 at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Opium War. A 99 year lease was secured by the British in 1898. In 1982 talks opened between the Chinese and the British about the return of the territory to China. A benign view of colonialism would be that when talks with the Chinese began in 1982 some limited attempts were made by the British to develop people’s understanding of rights and responsibilities, in particular through the publication of *Guidelines on Civic Education* 1985 (following the 1984 Joint Declaration which determined the return in 1997 to China). Turbulence was apparent at that time (Lee, 1999). Limited representative systems and elections were introduced in 1985. The Tiananmen Square massacre of protestors occurred in China in 1989. In 1990 the Basic Law provided for a post-handover Hong Kong constitution. The ban on teaching politics in schools was removed and the Bill of Rights passed in 1991 which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 (Leung, Chai & Ng 2000). Chris Patten’s time as the final British Hong Kong Governor was marked by struggles to introduce the reforms (many of which were accepted in 1994) to restore Hong Kong people’s confidence after 1989 but there were increasingly tense disagreements with Beijing.

Just before the resumption of Hong Kong’s sovereignty by China in 1997, the *Guidelines on Civic Education* 1996 were introduced which included

understanding of politics and government, learning for democracy, national identity, human rights, rule of law and, promoting global perspectives (Leung & Ng, 2004). Civic education, within the policy, was a cross curricular theme though some schools offered independent subject of civic education (Lee, 1999). The handover in 1997 was framed as ‘one country, two systems’ to allow for the continuation of Hong Kong as a major financial centre with elements of liberal capitalism. This position was challenged immediately by several crises including the Asian financial crisis of 1997, and the outbreak of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in 2003.

The Education Reform for all government schools and kindergartens, primary and secondary schools started in the early 2000s and was part of the move towards a new national identity. Civic education was put together with moral education as part of a cross curricular theme. At the time the *Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide 2012* was produced there was significant turbulence. Each protest had specific causal factors and was not immediately connected to opposition to the guidelines. The turbulent nature of the times is illustrated by the number of protests and the range of their focus. For example, parent and student groups opposed the *Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide 2012* as being biased towards of China (AsiaNews, 10/9/2012) and wanted to force these guidelines. The administration of second Chief Executive Donald Tsang had consulted on the 2012 guidelines and opposition was principally directed at the learning materials produced by the National Education Services Centre (not the guidelines themselves). The subsequent administration led by Chief Executive CY Leung had to cancel the plan to implement the 2012 guideline because of huge citizens’ opposition.

The Occupy and Umbrella movements started in September 2014 with young people opposing what they saw as the political injustice of the Standing

Committee of National People's Congress ruling on the nomination and selection method of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Chief Executive (the administrative head of Hong Kong SAR elected for 5-year terms by committee members mainly chosen by China). There was the MongKok rebellion (2016) and demonstrations about young people from Demosisto (formerly Scholarism) and Youngspiration who had been elected as Legislative Councillors but were later disqualified. In 2019 (since 2017) Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive Carrie Lam enjoys the support of Chinese President Xi but has also had to face challenges including large demonstrations in August 2017 (*South China Morning Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017) and summer 2019 (the latter emerging from an attempt to change the law on extradition). These protests were not about the guidelines but help us illuminate the turbulent context into which the guidelines were introduced.

Academics also engaged in these controversial matters. In the eyes of Beijing, Hong Kong's transition was a concern to which civic education had to respond (Zhao, 2011). As Zhao (2015) has explained, China had to find ways to move Hong Kong citizens to understand 'good' citizenship in mainland terms (Zhao, 2015). In Hong Kong, Ngai, Leung and Yuen (2014) have contended that, in a context of parent and student protest against National Education in 2012, civic education in schools should include political education, and opportunities to appreciate multiple civic identities, including those at local, national, and global levels. Fairbrother (2010) argues that citizenship education should be a compulsory subject. Kennedy and Kuang (2014) have argued that Hong Kong students are indeed proud of both, China and Hong Kong. But whilst they feel proud of Chinese achievements, they do not endorse their political system. Leung, Chong and Yuen (2016) have contested that citizens should hold fast to their

Hong Kong identity and related core values and also develop inclusive, multiple citizenship identities.

In practice, however, some schools continue to use the Moral and National Education Guidelines that were put on hold in 2012. There are multiple forms of civic education in Hong Kong and the Education Bureau has devolved matters so that decisions about this matter are schools-based. Some schools are clearly pro-Beijing. Much depends on a particular school community, the views of a principal and the actions of individual teachers. Kennedy (2017) has suggested that currently there is no central direction to civic education.

### **Debates in civic education: exploring a theoretical framework appropriate for the analysis of civic education guidelines in Hong Kong**

Debates in the ‘west’ about civic education have often focused on the interplay between the liberal and civic republican traditions, juxtaposing rights and duties in private and public contexts across perspectives of political literacy, social and moral responsibility, and community engagement (Davies & Chong 2015). The literature suggests that certain approaches to citizenship and citizenship education (i.e. personally responsible) are often linked to nationally orientated citizenship education, whereas others approach (e.g. liberal, justice-oriented) are often connected to cosmopolitan or global domains (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Overall, existing frameworks often identify distinctive purposes (e.g., education of a liberal, responsible, participatory citizenry) in relation to different domains (e.g., local, national, global) of citizenship and there is speculation about what educational pedagogies might contribute towards these purposes.

In east Asia, western models are not always relevant (Lee, 2004, 2008).

Considerations of the purpose of the guidelines, the fields or domains to which they apply and the pedagogies that are recommended might be different from

those expected in the West (Tse, 2007). Confucianism is essential to understand east Asian debates on civic education (David 2018; Ho, 2018), though it may only apply officially in some East Asian countries and will not necessarily be framed explicitly and uniformly.

Our review of the literature (e.g., Fairbrother, 2010; Fairbrother & Kennedy, 2011; Jackson, 2014; Kennedy, 2017; Lee, 1999, 2004 & 2008; Leung, Chai & Ng, 2000; Leung, Chong & Yuen, 2016; Leung & Ng, 2004; Leung, Yuen & Ngai, 2014; Li, 2018; Morris, Kan & Morris, 2000; Morris & Vickers, 2015; Ngai, Leung & Yuen, 2014; Tse, 2007) indicates the existence of two different understandings of Hong Kong civics. For most, civic education has been characterised by three very different approaches. First, during colonisation Hong Kong people were officially portrayed as ‘subjects’ (Lee, 1999; Morris, Kan & Morris, 2000) and as such the 1985 guidelines have been characterized as being indicative of colonialism,. Second, the 1996 guidelines were published immediately prior to the handover to China. Leung, Chai and Ng (2000) have interpreted the 1996 guidelines as a sharp break with what had been written previously. Leung and Ng (2004) and Lee (1999 & 2004) have indicated that liberal democracy is broadly how the 1996 guidelines should be interpreted. Civic education according to these authors is conceived mainly in relation to Hong Kong and is orientated to the development of understanding, skills and dispositions congruent with civil rights, civil liberties, and political freedoms. Third, the assertion of Chinese totalitarian nationalism and an authoritarian insistence on loyalty to the party-state has long been alleged by some (e.g., Leung & Print, 2002). Leung and Ng (2004) argued that immediately after 1997, there was a ‘re-depoliticization’ of civic education by the post-handover government, which put emphasis on teaching morality rather than civics as the priority. The interpretation of the 2012 guidelines as the assertion of Chinese authoritarianism is made very clear in the work of authors such as Li (2018).



Such a nationalistic orientation also neglects the space and places in which citizenship is practised in the domestic and intimate and spheres (Lister, 2007), and presented barriers when it comes to experiences of inequalities in gender (Predelli, Halsaa & Thun, 2012).

In contrast, Kennedy (2008 a and b) has come to a somewhat different conclusion from the tripartite framework outlined above (i.e., colonialism, liberal democracy and Chinese nationalism). According to Kliebard's (1986) classification of types of curricula and Kennedy's (2008a, p.20) discussion of it, in the Asia and Pacific, an amalgam is actually what exists. Kennedy (2008a) explains, "a postmodern approach to curriculum that is more eclectic, less reliant on a single essentialist perspective, more pragmatic, more diverse and capable of meeting the needs of multiple stakeholders" (p. 20).

Considering these two contrasting perspectives, we claim that we have a contribution to make to discussions about characterizing civic education. While several authors (e.g., Fairbrother & Kennedy, 2011; Lee, 2008; Leung, Chai & Ng, 2000; Morris, Kan & Morris, 2000) have explored guidelines for civic education in Hong Kong, , only in one study did researchers compare the three sets of guidelines we examine (Leung et al, 2014). Unlike them, we used an inductive approach. We were open to the possibility of our analysis revealing something that did not fit neatly into a single strand (i.e., colonialism or liberal democracy or Chinese nationalism) and perhaps was more eclectic and pragmatic.

## **Method**

### **Translating Ideas into Action? The Role of Guidelines**

Documentary analysis is a key part of civic education research (e.g., Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo 1999). Guidelines are the means by which official views about the nature and purpose of teaching and learning are transmitted. They are not necessarily directed at a particular group but they seem of obvious relevance to teachers and, as public documents, they are in part the means by which public and professional discourses are shaped. We recognize the value of exploring “public discourses about goals and values” (Torney-Purta et al., 1999, p.18) of which a guideline is both an indicator and a carrier.

Curriculum guidelines in Hong Kong are mandatory for key learning areas such as Chinese and English languages, mathematics and science. They are not compulsory for civic education, moral education, and sex education. The Education Bureau makes quality assurance visits to government funded primary and secondary schools to inspect school development plans, and evidence of teaching in accord with the relevant guidelines. A review report would be given to the governing body of the school and made public.

In the turbulent period in which the guidelines were written there was some continuity. The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is a governmental advisory body. It advised both British colonial and Hong Kong SAR governments throughout the period when the 1985, 1996 and 2012 guidelines were produced about curriculum development in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, including the writing of civic education guidelines. CDC is made up of members of various Hong Kong education stakeholders including school principals, teachers, post-secondary institutions, parent, business and technology sectors and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. Since its creation in the 1980s, there is a general perception that the Council is a respected professional body (The Government of Hong Kong SAR, 2019).

## Procedures

We chose to investigate the public discourses within the guidelines using qualitative content analysis as described by Miles and Huberman (1994). Qualitative content analysis has been successfully used in previous research on citizenship education (see e.g. Blevins et al., 2014; Dilworth, 2004; Ho, 2010) and it is particularly helpful to compare changes, and continuities over time in large amounts of data (Stemler, 2001; Terra, 2013). Thus, we considered that this method offered a systematic approach to the comparison whilst remaining consistent with our interpretivist assumptions.

In our analysis, we wanted to know: what the guidelines contained; how they were presented; and, whether they promoted a particular view of the nature and purpose of civic education (especially in relation to the tripartite framework - colonialism, liberal democracy, Chinese nationalism, - and the eclectic, pragmatic approach). We were driven by our interest in exploring similarities and differences regarding the purposes, domains and pedagogies that are implicitly or explicitly stated in the documents. We were not coming to the data with an attempt simply to examine what the text seemed to contain (conventional content analysis) or the desire to impose a particular theoretical framework (directed content analysis). We acknowledged that debates on civic education as the ones we have previously discussed would unavoidably frame our analysis, but we aimed, as much as possible, to suspend our previous understandings. This built on our experience of previous projects (Davies, Gregory & Riley 1999) in which we resisted the imposition of simple frameworks. We were alert to the need not to impose the framework of colonialism-liberal democracy-Chinese nationalism or, to see them all simplistically as being eclectically pragmatic but these things

were in our minds as possible interpretations. We drew from the summative content model in which key words are identified before and during data analysis based on the interests of the researchers and their reading of the literature (Hsieh & Shannon 2005).

There were overlapping stages to our data analysis. Firstly, there was discussion between all three authors about a wide range of ideas and issues about civic education in guidelines. We had different knowledge and understandings of the Hong Kong context and its guidelines. Author one, based in Hong Kong, had the most detailed knowledge of the context, whereas author two and three were ‘outsiders’ to that context.. We all were informed by a good deal of previously conducted work on civic education and documentary analysis (e.g., Davies & Issitt 2005; Lewis & Davies, 2018; Mori & Davies, 2015). We agreed to focus our analysis on examining domains of citizenship, purposes of citizenship education and pedagogical strategies. ‘Domains’ relates to areas within which citizenship is expressed (e.g., regarding an individual, family, school, local, and so on). ‘Purposes’ are about what civics and citizenship education is for (sense of belonging, morality, knowledge). ‘Pedagogical strategies’ refer to educational practices. At that point, while maintaining our inductive approach, there was close to an assumption that we would identify significant differences between the guidelines – evidence of late colonialism (1985), democracy (1996) and nationalism (2012). We did not give much credence initially to continuity. Secondly, an initial scheme of codes and categories (groups of codes) was created by author two with a set of memoranda providing information for each code. At the same time author three codified a random selection of sentences in each document using the provided scheme of codes and categories, and the set of memoranda. Thirdly, after discussion and agreement on this sample (but without a statistical record of inter-rater reliability, which is a limitation), author two undertook a second codification. Author one guided discussion throughout

(especially in consideration of what would be included in the final categories and how the argument in the article would be developed).

The text was codified using NVivo – likely one of the most commonly used data analysis software in educational research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Data were divided in sentences using a syntactical sampling strategy (Krippendorff, 2004). Each sentence was interrogated considering the research questions. There was simultaneously a systematic and iterative process, repeating the procedure and modifying the coding frame in the process.

At the end of this process, we found ourselves overwhelmed with the range, complexities and number of emerged codes (53) and codifications (5,039) and we decided that a systematic summary was necessary for us to be able to make a meaningful comparison across guidelines. We were aware of the reliance on open-minded but focused counting in many studies (e.g., Abdou 2017; Hilburn & Fitchett 2012) and we followed this path. We were not prepared simply to count as if words themselves had no meaning. But given our inductive approach, we did want to keep our minds as open as possible. We initially quantified our data by identifying the number of occurrences of each code in each source (absolute frequency)( $n_i$ ). We wanted to see if there were differences and, if so, discuss what those variations could mean. Following guidance on content analysis (e.g. Bonnafeous & Tournier, 1995; Wodak, 2004), we calculated the relative frequency of each code, i.e., the number of occurrences of the code in the source in relation to the total number of codes attributed to the entire source ( $f_i=n_i/N$ ). In our findings, we present the absolute ( $n_i$ ) and relative ( $f_i$ ) frequency for each code, with percentages corresponding to the percentage of sentences across the guideline that were codified with that code/category. We found these relative frequencies helpful to identify the main commonalities and differences across the

(otherwise extremely complex) guidelines and as such we present these findings in the article.

As Schreier (2014), we understand that there is no sharp divide between qualitative and quantitative content analysis. But in that continuum, we characterize this study as broadly qualitative for three main reasons. First, because our analysis was data driven in relation to the guidelines themselves. Our codes are given in the tables shown below. For the most part the meaning of our codes is clear without detailed explanation. The code for ‘local’ in relation to ‘domain’, for example, was used when a reference was made to the immediate area. In ‘purposes’ we coded, for example, for morality when references were explicitly and obviously to do with moral issues (using the word moral, morality and so on). We ensured that all codes were relevant to the central purpose of the project. This was done for all codes, including those that may appear to some as being generally rather than precisely positioned. So, for example, one of our codes is ‘book fairs’. This code (and all other codes) is specifically relevant to our focus. The original is:

Students can also gain more knowledge of Chinese culture with the help of learning activities such as assemblies, book fairs and project learning (CDC 2012, p.97).

Second, we offer this work as qualitative because there were occasions when during the codification process, we examine the implicit rather than the explicit content. For instance, we codified the sentence in the 2012 guidelines “Cultivating students’ moral and national qualities has always been one of the main objectives of school education in Hong Kong” in relation to the codes ‘China’, ‘Hong Kong’, ‘Sense of belonging’ and ‘Morality’.

Third, because even considering our inductive approach, we unavoidably interpreted these numeric results in line with our previous experiences and ideas about civic education rather than relying on statistical analysis. Our analytical framework as outlined above was considered throughout. As above, we used the work of previously published literature to allow for two main possibilities: tripartite framework (colonialism, liberal democracy, Chinese nationalism) or an eclectic, pragmatic approach. We have indicated above when explaining the meaning of those terms, the sorts of data that we were alert to. We were exploring who the documents refer to. So we would expect attention on postcolonial citizens by the British in 1985, the Hong Kongese in 1996 and the Chinese in 2012. The sort of emphasis in these cross-curricular documents would, we expected, reflect colonialism, liberal democracy, Chinese nationalism or eclectic pragmatism. If we were to develop an argument about colonialism being more evident in the 1985 document than the 1996 and 2012 documents, we would need to see more data in 1985 about British hegemony and limited involvement by citizens. If we were to see the 1996 document as something that promoted liberal democracy, we would expect to see more in that document compared to the other two documents about autonomy and independent thinking by the Hong Kongese. In the 2012 document, if previously published work about Chinese nationalism was to be accepted, we would find, for example, more about China and less about independent thinking. If our analysis was to lead us to argue about the existence of different perspectives in the documents, we would also expect changes in pedagogical purposes (using our previously explained account of the nature of colonialism, liberal democracy and Chinese nationalism in relation to critical thinking). If we were not to find many or any differences then we would be drawn more to Kennedy's (2008a) eclectic, pragmatic interpretation.

## Findings

## **Main features**

Against our initial assumptions, the guidelines – while they do contain differences - are strikingly similar. The aims of the curriculum, the content for each level, the proposed strategies of teaching, learning and assessment, and the implementation processes are discussed in all three cases. They are all written in a similar tone having teachers as expected readers, providing clarification about political and educational concepts. There is much common ground.

We are not suggesting that the intent or the reality of practice indicates continuity. We are not suggesting, as some have, that in social studies education continuity is more important than change (Thornton, 2008). That would be well beyond the scope of this article. We are arguing that we expected to see differences in the guidelines given that they were produced across turbulent times with a sharp change regarding ultimate governmental authority and because several authors have represented those guidelines as being different from each other. Our argument is that the documents are similar, and we speculate that perhaps a pragmatic commitment to normative stability is revealed. In other words, continuity (normative stability) is being presented across all 3 guidelines.

Of course, there are some differences in the documents. The 2012 Guideline is considerably longer (37848 words) than the previous two guidelines (19096 words in 1985; 16123 words in 1996). Whilst the 1985 Guidelines focuses on students from kindergarten to primary and then secondary (about three to seventeen years), the 2012 guidelines only provide information for primary and secondary (about six to seventeen years) forms. The 1985 Guidelines are explicit in discussing the role of the informal and the hidden curriculum, having specific chapters addressing this question. The focus of the 1996 and the 2012 Guidelines is on the formal curriculum and discussion on the informal and hidden curriculum



is less emphasized. At a time of mass protests with strongly conducted debates about many fundamental matters and with a focus on education, these differences do not strike us as being extreme.

We present our findings in relation to domains of citizenship (i.e., communities associated with citizenship from the individual through local, national and global); purposes of citizenship education (e.g., sense of belonging); and, pedagogical and assessment strategies (e.g., exchange programmes and visits) (see Table I).

Table I. Code categories: categories emerged from data and weight codes within the analysis

	Absolute frequency ( $n_i$ )			Relative frequency ( $f_i$ ) <sup>1</sup>		
	1985	1996	2012	1985	1996	2012
Categories						
Domains	340	427	754	22.34 %	35.70 %	32.49 %
Purposes	950	724	1283	62.42 %	60.54 %	55.28 %
Pedagogical and assessment Strategies	205	31	297	13.47 %	2.59 %	12.80 %

## Domains of citizenship

<sup>1</sup> The  $f_i$  in table I and the following tables corresponds to the absolute frequency ( $n_i$ ) divided by the total number of codes attributed to sentences in each source (this is, 1985 Guidelines, 1522 codes; 1996 Guidelines, 1196 codes; 2012 Guidelines, 2321 codes). It worth noting here that some sentences are not attributed any code and other sentences are attributed multiple codes.

We identified seven different domains of citizenship: individual (personal), family (nuclear or elementary family), school (the study school), neighbourhood/district (immediate living environment), Hong Kong, China, and the world (see Table II). Broadly, over the three guidelines the relevance on most things stays the same. The main difference is the emphasis on Hong Kong and China. In the 1985 Guidelines, Hong Kong as a context of citizenship is emphasized. In the 1996 Guidelines the emphasis is placed on Hong Kong and China but also in the world community. After the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, in the 2012 Guidelines the emphasis is clearly on China.

Table II. Domains of citizenship: codes (with illustrations) that emerged from data and weighted codes within the category

	Absolute frequency ( $n_i$ )			Relative frequency ( $f_i$ )		
Codes	1985	1996	2012	1985	1996	2012
Individual (e.g. personal)	64	24	91	4.20%	2.01%	3.92%
Family (e.g. nuclear or elementary family)	42	56	113	2.76%	4.68%	4.87%
School (e.g. the study school)	41	39	51	2.69%	3.26%	2.20%
Neighbourhood/ District (e.g. immediate living environment)	41	56	8	2.69%	4.68%	0.34%
Hong Kong	90	79	58	5.91%	6.61%	2.50%
China	43	82	307	2.83%	6.86%	13.23%

The world	19	91	126	1.25%	7.61%	5.43%
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The world as a domain increases its profile between 1985 and 1996 but drops in 2012. However, in both 1996 and 2012, the citizenship education curriculum is, at least to some extent, oriented to educate global citizens. For instance, the 1996 Guidelines specify, “As a global citizen, the civic learner should be aware of the basic human rights and responsibilities which form the grounds for respecting individuals, and various social and ethnic groups” (1996, p. 24), and the 2012 Guidelines recognize as one of its aims,

Recognition of identity: to build identities in different domains; to care for family, society, the country and the world; to become informed and responsible family members, citizens, nationals, and global citizens (2012, p.3).

### Purposes of citizenship education

There are striking similarities between the 1985, 1996 and 2012 guidelines. Five purposes are highlighted (see Table III).

Table III. Purposes of citizenship education: codes emerged from data and weighted codes within the category.

	Absolute frequency ( $n_i$ )			Relative frequency ( $f_i$ )		
	1985	1996	2012	1985	1996	2012
Sense of belonging	38	21	99	2.50%	1.76%	4.23%

Morality – values orientated	356	244	591	23.39%	20.40%	25.27%
Knowledge and skills	373	255	312	24.51%	21.32%	13.34%
Participation	128	159	112	8.41%	13.29%	4.79%
Autonomy and independent thinking	55	45	169	3.61%	3.76%	7.23%

**sense of belonging.** Overall, when compared to the other purposes of civic education, there is little emphasis on a general sense of belonging. However, an expected point of difference between guidelines is the greater emphasis on the Chinese sense of belonging. There is a concern in 2012 to “develop a common sense of belonging” (CDC, 2012, pp. 21, 39, 97, 98) between students from Hong Kong and the ‘Mainland’.

**Moral, national and global values.** The education of values is very important across the three guidelines. There are multiple explicit references in 2012 to the relationship between “moral and national qualities” (e.g. CDC, 2012, pp. 17). The 2012 Guidelines document specifies,

Moral education and national education, both aiming at cultivating students’ qualities, are integrated into one subject because they are closely interrelated. While moral education cultivates good morals of students and equips them with fundamental desirable national qualities, national education helps establish their national identity and enhances

their national qualities by deepening their understanding of the current situation of the country. (2012, p. 14).

But all three guidelines describe “national values” as involving the appreciation of the national culture and traditions. For example, in 1985, students are expected to learn “Respect for Chinese culture and tradition, and the cultural heritage of her neighbours” (1985, p. 19). The CDC 2012 document at times seems to emphasise “Chinese virtues” generally in that they include “benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, and wisdom” (2012, p. 12).

“Global” or “universal values” appear in 1996 and 2012:

understanding and acquiring these universal values are important for the continuity and appreciation of human civilization on the one hand, and for enabling one to be a responsible, responsive and contributive citizen both in the domestic, and the international contexts on the other (CDC, 1996, p. 13)

There is some continuity with the 1996 Guidelines specifying in bold enjoyment of “Human dignity”, “honesty”, “courage”, “rationality, affectivity, aesthetics and creativity”, “equality”, “freedom” “kindness”, and “benevolence” (CDC, 1996, p. 13) as universal values. These values are slightly different in the 2012 Guidelines where “peace, benevolence, justice, freedom, democracy, human rights, and respect for others” are specified (CDC, 2012, p. 2; p. 15).

**Knowledge and skills.** Differences are most noticeable regarding knowledge and skills. In 1985 the aim is to help pupils to “become informed and responsible citizens” (CDC, 1985, p. 4). In 1996, the focus is on skills:

developing in young people not only the basic political knowledge, but also the skills and attitudes, and competence necessary for them to

observe their civic rights and responsibilities, to acquire critical-thinking dispositions and civic awareness, and to become -rational -and responsible citizens (CDC, 1996, p. 5).

The 1985 Guidelines strongly emphasize the knowledge associated with the Hong Kong domain. Students are expected to learn about “Hong Kong’s social and political development (CDC, 1985, p. 3), “Hong Kong’s way of life” (CDC, 1985, p. 11), “Hong Kong Government” (CDC, 1985, p. 12), “Hong Kong’s physical environment, its people, its historical and economic development” (CDC, 1985, p. 19), “major current issues related to the political, economic, social and cultural development of Hong Kong” (CDC, 1985, p. 30), etc. When developing skills, these are also often related to Hong Kong. For instance, students are expected to “To collect and interpret simple data and information about Hong Kong” (CDC, 1985, p. 19). The relevance of the knowledge and skills associated with the personal, family, national, and district domains is rather weakly developed, the knowledge and skills associated to ‘the world’, and ‘the school’ as domains are almost non-existent.

In 1996 students are expected to learn knowledge and skills about Hong Kong, China, and the World, emphasizing the relations between the three regions in political, economic and, cultural terms:

To promote students' understanding of Hong Kong's relation with the mother county, its political, economic and cultural ties with neighbours; and to develop concern for the major events of Hong Kong, China and the world (CDC, 1996, p. 7).

To equip students with the necessary social and political skills and understanding, and to prepare them for a responsible and decision-

making role ready to make contributions to the Hong Kong society and the nation (CDC, 1996, p.9).

However, the emphasis in 1996 is upon the national and political aspects of citizenship: laws, rights and responsibilities, political concepts, and governmental systems.

Knowledge and skills, in contrast, are less prominent in 2012 than before. The 2012 focus is on values and attitudes: “The cultivation of values and attitudes serves as the guiding principle of the MNE subject” (CDC, 2012, p. 11). Knowledge and skill-based material in 2012 tend to refer to China. Cultural and historical knowledge is particularly relevant with students learning, for example, about “the development of ancient cities from the famous North Song Dynasty” (CDC, 2012, p. 32) or “Chinese virtues through stories about ethics and virtues of friendship from classical literature and modern society” (CDC, 2012, p. 29).

**Participation** . The emphasis on participatory citizenship varies. In 1985 students should participate in school and district context. For instance,

To participate in making simple class rules; To understand and observe rules and regulations (CDC, 1985, p. 18).

To keep the district community tidy and clean; To communicate politely with people in the district community; To participate in district affairs (CDC, 1985, p. 27)

A participatory citizenship covering different geographical domains is evidenced in 1996: “Civic learning is not only limited to the understanding and acquisition of knowledge, it is also action prone” (CDC, 1996, p. 32). Students are expected to participate in different domains including the world, the nation, Hong Kong,

the district, the school, and the family. Participation is encouraged through knowledge and skills:

To be an active participant, one needs to know how to promote interest, how to cooperate with others, how to be empathetic to others, how to communicate with others, and how to arrive at corporate decisions (CDC, 1996, p. 19)

Students are also required to “self-reflect” (CDC, 1996, p.19) about the ways through which they can make a contribution. There are recommended questions: “How can I promote human rights personally, socially and internationally?” (CDC, 1996, p. 39), and “How can I enhance civic awareness in my family?” (CDC, 1996, p. 33).

Participation is less noticeable in 2012. The participatory dimension involves making “contributions to family, society, the country and the world” (CDC, 2012, p. 10), and “practice values and attitudes” (CDC, 2012, p. 12). Engagement is related to ‘the family’, ‘the national’, and ‘the global’ domain. Within the family, students are encouraged to take responsibilities such as caring for “senior and junior family members” (CDC, 2012, p. 45), and “foster family harmony” (CDC, 2012, p.54). In the national domain students are to practise national qualities and Chinese virtues. Key stage two students: “Learn the wisdom in classics, develop virtues and elegance, and put them into practice in daily life” (CDC, 2012, p. 39). In the global domain peace, human rights, and the protection of the environment are promoted. Students are expected to “be willing to adopt a lifestyle and develop consumption habits, e.g. practising low carbon living and energy saving, that contribute to environmental protection” (CDC, 2012, p.33).

**Critical thinking.** In 2012 autonomy and independent thinking are emphasised. In 1985 and 1996 references are made to critical thinking highlighting: “the



facility for critical and logical reasoning” (CDC, 1985, p.3), and insisting “the principle of rationality must be observed as far as possible” (CDC, 1996, p. 15). In both cases, independent thinking is associated with the learning of particular skills such as the analysis and interpretation of data. But it is in 2012 when autonomy and independent thinking become a key feature of the curriculum after education reform in the 2000s. Independent thinking is not only related to skills but also values. Indeed, “Critical thinking skills”, one of the “Nine Generic Skills”, aims at helping “students to draw out meaning from given data or statements, generate and evaluate arguments, and make their own judgement.”, (CDC, 2012, p. 3), and one of the national qualities is “to think independently” (CDC, 2012, p.21).

### **Pedagogical and assessment strategies**

There are differences between the guidelines regarding pedagogical and assessment strategies but given the dramatic political circumstances in Hong Kong, we were again struck by their similarity (Table IV). These pedagogical and assessment strategies cut across learning in classroom, whole school, experiential learning in community, nation or overseas respectively. Debate activities specifically defined as class discussions, simulations or controversial issues appear to be key pedagogical strategies across the three guidelines. Controversial issues are key in 1985, 1996 and 2012. In 1985 and 1996, the strategy is described in appendices, whereas in 2012, the strategy is emphasized in the main text. “Through analysing and discussing these controversial issues “students will develop independent thinking, clarify their values and establish their personal stance” (CDC, 2012, p. 91). And,

Through discussion and self-reflection, students learn to cherish values such as self-affirmation and self-acceptance, which enable them to

become confident when facing difficulties and challenges during their growth (CDC, 2012, p. 67).

As for the differences, in 1985, in addition to class discussions and simulation activities, educational visits and a democratic school ethos are highlighted:

The particular approach to civic education recommended here favours: (a) value orientation based on rational enquiry rather than the inculcation of rules pertaining to a specific mode of behaviour; (b) an open, supportive environment which encourages free expression and discussion; and (c) developing a stimulating socialisation experience which is related to age and maturity and is directly relevant to the pupils' everyday life (CDC, 1985, p. 43).

Educational visits are expected to “enable pupils to acquire first-hand knowledge through direct observation and personal interaction with the people they meet” (CDC, 1985, p. 47); simulations are identified as being particularly helpful to foster skills as “scientific thinking by developing and testing hypothesis” (CDC, 1985, p. 60).

In 1996 there is less detail about pedagogy. The Guidelines emphasize the relevance of the school climate:

whether the regulations are respected and fairly implemented, whether the students are fairly treated, whether the students are respected as individuals with dignity, liberty and individuality, whether one can have a channel of appeal in face of injustice, etc., may all affect the civic learner's attitudes towards authorities in one's social life (CDC, 1996, p. 29).

“School assemblies” (e.g. CDC, 1996, p.45) as seen as key activities for citizenship education. Additionally, media resources are “important sources providing updated information on various issues of civic education” (CDC, 1996, p. 60), and “tests” are a key assessment activity. “A range of objective tests could be used to assess students' learning outcomes in knowledge acquired” (CDC, 1996, p. 55).

In 2012 there is a range of assessment activities including learning portfolios, self, peer and external assessment. The significance of these activities, nevertheless, is minimal when compared to teaching and learning strategies such as controversial issues, class discussions, exchange programmes, community service and educational visits. In addition to controversial issues, exchange programmes, community services activities and educational visits are emphasized as experiential learning activities. In 2012:

providing related learning experiences/activities such as educational visits, exchange programmes and service learning opportunities in MNE learning in order to enhance students' learning outcomes through authentic and real-life learning experiences (CDC, 2012, p. 67).

These activities are expected to help students to “establish their national identity” (CDC, 2012, p. 69) and to “put into practice various positive values such as serving others, commitment and social morals” (CDC, 2012, p. 69).

Table III. Purposes of citizenship education: codes emerged from data and weighted codes within the category.

	Absolute frequency ( $n_i$ )			Relative frequency ( $f_i$ )		
	1985	1996	2012	1985	1996	2012

Sense of belonging	38	21	99	2.50%	1.76%	4.23%
Morality – values orientated	356	244	591	23.39%	20.40%	25.27%
Knowledge and skills	373	255	312	24.51%	21.32%	13.34%
Participation	128	159	112	8.41%	13.29%	4.79%
Autonomy and independent thinking	55	45	169	3.61%	3.76%	7.23%

## Discussion

The guidelines are different from each other principally in that they reflect the new connection with China. The context or domain of citizenship across the guidelines (slightly) shifts so the Chinese community is emphasized in more recently produced documents. But this does not mean dramatic changes regarding the emphasis on most other contexts. Rather, all guidelines are hybrid, with orientations towards Hong Kong, China, and the World (Tse, 2007) but also towards individuality and the family. We had been expecting there to be significant differences that reflect - and perhaps even contribute to causing - the turbulence that was so obviously present in Hong Kong. We had assumed in our initial discussions about this project that we would be labelling these guidelines as evidence of late colonialism (1985), democracy (1996) and nationalism (2012). What surprises us is the similarity between the guidelines. Our key argument of

continuity is aligned with Kennedy's (2008a) argument about policy makers preferring for civic education to be declared eclectically and pragmatically.

In relation to purpose of civic education, there is a general shift away from skills and towards values. The focus of the 2012 guidelines is on values, and Chinese nationalism with Hong Kong characteristics (Kennedy & Kuang, 2014), and knowledge is not emphasized as strongly as in previous guidelines. This focus on values can be seen in the outline of contents (belonging, knowledge, skills, and values) and in the recommendation of strategies (exchange programmes, visits). This focus is perhaps most easily seen in the change of the title of the guidelines, with an emphasis on moral and national education instead of civic education, which reflects Chinese nationalism in Hong Kong (Kennedy & Kuang, 2014). But the principal change is whether civic attributes are considered 'knowledge and skills' or 'values', more than the content of the attributes themselves. For instance, 'wisdom' replaces 'knowledge'. There is also a change from a participatory citizenship (1996), understood in relation to specific criteria (having a knowledge of facts, gaining certain skills, and self-reflecting in ways that will enable students to become participatory citizens) to participation as part of what are perceived as national qualities. Participation in this sense seems to have become less of a thing that is simply to be done, and more an aspect of a particular identity. Although conflicts can be found regarding integrating Hong Kong legally and culturally with a larger nation-state (Jackson, 2014), we found it interesting that this conflict is not evidenced in a controversial manner in the documents we have examined. There is no shift from colonialism, to liberal democracy to Chinese nationalism. There is continuity in a pragmatic approach.

The guidelines are also similar to each other in relation to recommended pedagogical strategies. Class discussions, controversial issues and simulations are identified as key educational practices across the three guidelines. The

overarching purpose, in defining the ideal citizen and the ideal education for this citizenship, seems to us to be an avoidance of what could have been regarded by readers as controversy. A pragmatic approach in the form of pedagogical continuity seems more in evidence than radical change.

So, what do these shifts tell us about civic education and about guidelines? In relation to civic education, we are witnessing in the guidelines attempts to achieve legitimization of particular characterizations of the ideal citizen. In a fast-changing context where there are clear differences in historical legacy, ideological context, and economic perspective we can see what is expected of the citizen. There is a language of guidelines in which ‘good’ things (e.g. participation, autonomy, critical thinking) are highlighted. These struggles indicate contestation around moves from colonialism to nationalism and new economically liberal forms of market socialism from China, as well as from localism within Hong Kong. But this potential contest around a shift from the local to the national and from the liberal (right-based British colonialist) to the republican (responsibilities-based Chinese patriotic) is being handled by the civil servants who wrote the guidelines - serving under the British colonial and then Chinese Hong Kong government - with some sophistication. Civic education is the focal point of a struggle for dominance:

Amidst the tides of globalization, nationalization and localization it is no wonder that the plurality of citizenship discourses in flux are characterized by ambiguous, flexible, complex, uncertain, contradictory with eclectic manners with different elements overlapping and hybridizing. (Tse 2007, p. 174)

Our finding of consistency is explained by the need of policy makers to preserve the fundamental aspects of society. Society always must be governed:

the evidence across our three guidelines of a commitment to normative stability is in that sense unsurprising. It is true that there were sharp social changes from an early point in how things were done during the period 1985-2012. There was the clear expectation that British rule and the possibility of complete democratic autonomy for Hong Kong was very likely to be limited (Baum, 1999; Dimbleby, 1997; Patten, 1998/2012). The Chinese Beijing government refused to have any formal collaboration with the last governor (Chris Patten) who arrived in 1992. The Chinese established a parallel provisional legislative council during Patten's tenure. But the general commitment among policy makers to continuity, the particular work of the CDC and general expectations about limited change are significant for explaining why there is no evidence in the guidelines themselves of significant change.

### **Conclusion**

Previous research suggests the existence of significant difference in Hong Kong civic education guidelines across time. The overall argument, until now, was that there was domination and neglect by Britain (pre 1985), inadequate attempts to promote representative democracy but depoliticization by Britain (1985), assertion of democracy by the Hong Kongese in 1996 and then Chinese nationalist domination by the Hong Kong SAR government (which is resisted but later on practised as school-based curricular intervention) in 2012. Such an argument is consistent with our previous research. When previously we have analysed historical documents about civic education with those in use more recently it has been easy to see dramatic shifts over time (e.g., what is contained in the [English] Ministry of Education, 1949 document is hugely different from what appears in the Crick Report, DfEE / QCA 1998).

But our analysis in this project suggests something different. There are, of course, real differences in the development of citizenship and civic education in Hong Kong. But we differ from the work of some other authors in that we are not able to label these guidelines as colonialism (1985), liberal democracy (1996), and nationalism (2012). Rather there is a good deal of similarity between the guidelines in their purpose, educational manifestations and form of expression. They all target normative stability and, crucially, they are all presented in a way in which invites contextually specific interpretation. In 1985 the British do not want their document to look like an example of colonialist literature. In 1996 the Hong Kongese were likely to wish to recognise the existence of different voices. Those calling for democracy in 1996 would be foolhardy not to recognise political realities. In 2012 nationalism is very cautiously expressed in the ways we have indicated (e.g., participation becomes an identity not a skill; China figures more strongly) but beyond that the Chinese would be guilty of politically unsophisticated actions if they were to present a document crudely presented as Chinese nationalism. Partisan statements are not included.

There is an eclectic and pragmatic approach showing a commitment to normative stability. Lam's (2007) assertion of the need to avoid (the appearance of) partisanship is aligned with our interpretation. Kennedy's (2008a) emphasis on pragmatism is what we would support on the basis of our analysis rather than the characterizations of colonialism, liberal democracy and Chinese nationalism as provided by others. We find it interesting that some of those authors (e.g., Li 2018) who present the Chinese approach as authoritarian include a contradictory aside when a direct reference is made to a document: "The Guideline of the National Program for Medium and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010–20) sought to strengthen civic awareness education to improve students' consciousness of democracy, law-abidingness, freedom and equality, and justice" (p.184).



We do not wish to under-emphasize the struggle over the substance of citizenship education that involves clashes over its fundamentally different characterizations. But we argue, broadly, that policy makers consistently target the achievement of normative stability. In other words, a stable society in which there is continuity of power and authority is preferred over fundamental change. Continuity is expressed through the maintenance of existing power arrangements with variation principally in relation to what is deemed appropriate in specific political contexts. When there is the intention to develop potentially controversial substantive difference, key messages are carefully presented in guideline documents. There may, of course, be a desire by the guideline writers to diffuse controversy in this transition period and to subvert democratic values by shifting from potentially controversial *doing* to a relatively benign *being*.

More widely, our results might be helpful to problematize the way we understand culture wars. Evans (2004) has referred to such wars as competing camps, each with its own ideologies and leaders. In similar terms, Goodhart (2017) has written about clashes of ideas in divided societies. Such understandings appear to suggest that the society is divided vertically, with different social groups and their leaders defending distinctive cultural projects such as civic guidelines. But there is also the possibility of ‘power’ wars. Horizontal struggles in which political leaders across competing ideologies intent to pacify and ‘retain’ power from turbulent societies. In turbulent times, civic education can serve as a vehicle for promoting shared and integrated societies (Gallagher, 2005) that aim to reduce tensions between citizens and their political authorities. This argument is important as it suggests that assumptions about the meaning of guidelines may have been made by some writers almost in the absence of any sustained focus on the documents themselves. We argue that the meaning of citizenship takes place in an arena

where there are political and academic debates about both the reality of the relationship between the citizen, the educator and the state, and the nature and purpose of the guidelines. Thus, meaning is brought to the document as well as the document having a meaning. The fundamental meaning of the guidelines are unchanging (stability is preferred); the form of expression (a guideline document) is unchanging; and what is officially preferred is moulded according to the particular prevailing political climate. Consistency is presented (in substance and form) with the unstated expectation that interpretation will allow for recognition of significant difference across guidelines regarding the context of changed political circumstances. As such, we need to avoid asking simplistically ‘what do the guidelines mean?’ but rather ‘what is the possible intended - and likely actual - impact of the guidelines?’ In more theoretical terms, the signifiers are stable but the discourses attributed to them change (Laclau, 2007).

We argue that this subtle guideline development and interpretation leads to the need for further research on the reasons for and the outcomes of this process. As, possibly, very different messages are phrased similarly, we need to ask about the interaction between the production of the guidelines and political shifts which is perhaps made possible by doing oral history among the writers of the guidelines, and whether the process of educators reading and responding to the guidelines has itself provided a form of political education. If so, what particular political messages have been accepted and which have been rejected in a process in which there is incremental political creep or alternatively whether guidelines are instruments of counter-productive reaction? What connections may be made between the guidelines and political structures and what characterizations, and practices of citizenship will emerge? What, above all, for our concerns, does this mean for the education that is provided for young people? We will not know the answers to those questions by reading guidelines. But the guidelines provide a space for those meanings to be developed and debated.

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